

# AAZK Chapter Resource: Communication



*Produced by The AAZK Resource Committee*

*This document was produced to help answer common questions faced by AAZK Chapters. The goal of this resource is to act as a guideline that completely and systematically answers common chapter questions with the understanding that all chapters are run differently. This information may serve as a companion, but not as an alternative, to the AAZK National Operations Manual.*

## **How to Contact AAZK National?**

- For General AAZK or Chapter inquiries, email [Ed.Hansen@aazk.org](mailto:Ed.Hansen@aazk.org) <sup>1</sup>
- Contacting Board members and committee leaders can be done by logging into the member section of the website
  - For Board Members, click on Board of Directors and Staff under the “Contact” Tab and the email addresses for Board members are listed on the page
  - For Committee Leaders, click on the committee you’re interested in under the “Committees & Programs” Tab and the email addresses for committee leadership are listed at the bottom of the page

## **How do Chapters Communicate?**

### **Chapter Leadership Communication**

- Communication amongst the chapter’s officers can be in the form of email, text message, as well as social media message chains in order to create a conversation thread
  - Whatever form of communication leadership chooses, make sure it works for all members of chapter leadership<sup>5</sup>
  - Creating a system of communication that has a paper trail can be helpful to refer to later and to record conversations<sup>6</sup>
- Officer meeting notes that can be accessed after the meeting can be helpful
  - Make minutes accessible via email, Google Drive, or Dropbox

### **Communication with Membership**

- Email is usually the best option to communicate with all chapter members at once
  - Make sure chapter email lists are regularly updated so new members don’t get left out<sup>5</sup>
    - Place meeting reminders in interns’ mailboxes to encourage them to come to monthly meetings<sup>5</sup>
- Keep detailed meeting notes that can be accessed by all members
  - Make minutes accessible via email, Google Drive, or Dropbox



- Members can be given access to view documents but not edit
- Events and reminders on social media accounts can also be useful when communicating with members who follow the chapter's pages<sup>5</sup>
- Creating a chapter social media page is a great way to spread chapter news and events to members
  - Have both a public and private group. The private group is for members only. The public group shares information about various events for the chapter<sup>3</sup>

### **Communicating Historical Chapter Knowledge**

- Keep track of all the chapter information that will need to be known by future members or officers. Passing along this information will help the chapter to operate smoothly and continue to grow
  - Keep updated digital copies of all chapter bylaws, finances, and other business.
    - Make these documents available to future officers via a usb jump drive, Google docs, or Dropbox
  - Keep track of information for each chapter fundraiser
    - This will provide a good reference for what worked and what didn't from year to year
    - Include businesses contacted, pros/cons of the events, volunteers required, planning and event timelines, and event coordinator information
      - Fundraiser break down meetings (after the event) event can provide vital information for these type of documents

### **Communicating with Host Facilities**

- Meet with your curator/manager to explain the goals of the chapter<sup>2</sup>
  - This meeting a professional courtesy to your facility, it creates a professional image<sup>1</sup>
    - Inform hosts about AAZK Institutional memberships
  - Designate a facility liaison, someone who will be responsible for communicating information between the chapter and the host institution<sup>6</sup>
  - Explain how chapter goals may be beneficial to the facility<sup>1</sup>
    - A chapter can help the institution's staff by providing professional development opportunities, which ultimately helps the institution and the animals in their care<sup>4</sup>
    - A chapter can help expand on the host institution's mission with additional conservation fundraisers and education<sup>4</sup>
    - A chapter can provide volunteers for larger institutional events, and in return a portion of generated funds can support the chapter<sup>3</sup>
  - Explain what the chapter might need from the institution
    - Meeting space, advertising on grounds, animal art sales, storage space, etc
- When communicating to host facility staff or volunteers about AAZK Chapter's meetings or events it is essential to gain permission from that institution to do so



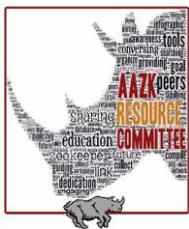
- All staff emails or in-house newsletters can often help spread the word about meetings, updates, and events
  - Send a quarterly newsletter to facility all staff as opposed to repetitive all staff emails<sup>5</sup>
  - Newsletters and annual presentations at staff meetings can be a strong tool for communicating successes to a host facility
    - At facility staff meetings have a chapter representative give a short summary of current chapter activities
- Volunteers from host institutions can be an asset to an event
  - Docents can provide additional help at events and provide a different perspective<sup>3</sup>
  - Docents can help attract new attendees that may be outside of the established chapter membership crowd<sup>3</sup>

### Communication within the Community

- Websites and social media can allow for easy updates and communication with those outside of your facility<sup>3</sup>
- Sign-up sheets at events for email mailing lists can help your chapter keep attendees in-the-loop of all chapter events
- Check for institutional support to post flyers, posters, or other advertisements at your front gate or in your member newsletters and magazines
- Check with your local community for free sources to promote your event
  - Some cities have local papers that are printed weekly to advertise events in their area. Check these resources for cost and how far in advance things need to be submitted
  - Local radio shows will have time slots for local non-profits to promote events<sup>5</sup>

### Citations

1. AAZK website
2. AAZK Operations Manual (8.02-8.08)
3. Kansas City Zoo AAZK Chapter
4. Pittsburgh AAZK Chapter
5. NE Wisconsin Zoo AAZK Chapter
6. AAZK Board of Directors



The AAZK Resource Committee's Chapter and Networking Resource Team is responsible for the content and production of this document.

For questions, clarification, or suggestions for future resources, contact: [arc@azk.org](mailto:arc@azk.org).

